

**CONSOLIDATED CITY OF INDIANAPOLIS
AND COUNTY OF MARION,
STATE OF INDIANA**

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 1, 2003

**APPOINTMENT OF THE
MARION COUNTY TAXPAYER ADVOCATE**

WHEREAS, in 1999, the Indiana Supreme Court ordered local assessors to change the way homes and businesses are valued and to begin assessing property based on criteria related to market value; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the Court order, the burden of paying property taxes this year shifted from businesses to homes, particularly older homes since they consistently had been undervalued under the old system, causing many homeowners across the State and in Marion County to receive higher property tax bills; and

WHEREAS, many property tax bills have been increased much more than was expected, causing senior citizens and homeowners on fixed incomes to fear they may lose their homes, or even worse, actually to be in danger of losing their homes; and

WHEREAS, currently there is no public office, department or agency to advocate for everyday homeowners as they navigate through the process of reviewing and appealing their assessment to the Marion County Property Tax Assessment Board of Appeals; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the other initiatives of the Mayor's Property Taxpayer Assistance Program, there is an immediate need for such a public office and the assistance it can render to senior citizens and homeowners on fixed incomes;

NOW, THEREFORE, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Indianapolis, Indiana, and as successor-in-interest to the Board of Commissioners of Marion County, Indiana, it is hereby ordered as follows:

1. The temporary position of Marion County Taxpayer Advocate hereby is established.
2. The Office of Corporation Counsel, under the authority provided in Section 202-102 of the "Revised Code of the Consolidated City and County," hereby is directed to employ by any appropriate arrangement the services of an attorney to serve as the Marion County Taxpayer Advocate.
3. The Taxpayer Advocate shall serve at the pleasure of the Mayor, and shall perform the following services under the direction of the Corporation Counsel:

- a. the screening of real property tax bills and assessments brought to his or her attention by senior citizens and homeowners on fixed incomes, for the purpose of determining whether there exists any factual or legal basis that is likely to lower the tax debt on appeal;
- b. in coordination with the *pro bono* program of the Indianapolis Bar Association, the prosecution of meritorious appeals of property tax assessments on behalf of such senior citizens and homeowners on fixed incomes;
- c. also in coordination with the *pro bono* program of the Indianapolis Bar Association, and/or other local programs with similar goals and resources, the identification, recruitment, and supervision of volunteer attorneys as necessary to assist him or her in the performance of services listed under part a. and part b., above;
- d. the dissemination of information to the public for the purpose of educating citizens as to their rights as property taxpayers, the forms of property tax relief which are available to them, the manner in which property tax assessments may be appealed, and the assistance which may be available to citizens through the Property Taxpayer Assistance Program;
- e. such other services in furtherance of the Property Taxpayer Assistance Program as hereafter may be directed in writing by either the Mayor or the Corporation Counsel; and,
- f. the coordination with the Corporation Counsel on the provision of such additional resources as may be required to assist the Taxpayer Advocate in the performance of these services.

The Taxpayer Advocate shall provide the Corporation Counsel with a summary report of his or her activities pursuant to this Executive Order, at such times as may be specified by the Corporation Counsel.

4. This Executive Order is issued with the expectation that all City and County offices, boards, agencies and employees will cooperate fully with the Taxpayer Advocate in the performance of his or her services.

5. This Executive Order shall become effective immediately and shall be RESCINDED automatically and without further notice or Order at the close of business on December 31, 2003, unless earlier extended by the Mayor.

DATED this Third day of July, 2003.

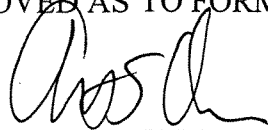
CONSOLIDATED CITY OF INDIANAPOLIS
AND MARION COUNTY, INDIANA

By:


Bart Peterson, Mayor

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY:

By:



A. Scott Chinn, Corporation Counsel